

Influence of Ethnicity on Uniqueness & Snob Value in Purchase Behavior of Luxury Brands

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Abstract-This study aims to study how ethnicity of people influences two main dimensions of luxury value namely uniqueness and snob value. Data was collected by simple random sampling from luxury customers in Mumbai. They were administered a structured questionnaire which had statements on uniqueness value and snob value. Then we studied how these two values get influenced by the ethnicity of the luxury customer. It was found in the Study that both uniqueness value and snob value are influenced by the ethnicity of the customer. It is found that north Indians have a higher score for uniqueness and snob value as compared to people from south, east and west. We can understand how uniqueness and snob value are very important dimensions of luxury value and how they get influenced by the ethnicity of the customer. This will help luxury brand companies to provide their customers with products which provide them uniqueness and snob value and also they can make strategies differently for people of different ethnicities. Though similar studies have been done abroad, we are trying to study the impact of ethnicity on uniqueness and snob value in purchase behavior of luxury brands for customers in Mumbai.

Keywords- Luxury brand; Uniqueness; Snob value; Ethnicity

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Luxury brands: The concept of luxury has been present in various forms since the beginning of civilization. Its role was just as important in ancient western and eastern empires as it is in modern societies. With the clear differences between social classes in earlier civilizations, the consumption of luxury was limited to the elite classes. It also meant the definition of luxury was fairly clear. Whatever the poor cannot have and the elite can was identified as luxury. With increasing 'democratization', (Wong & Ahuvia (1998)), several new product categories were created within the luxury market which were aptly called – accessible luxury or mass luxury. This kind of luxury specifically targeted the middle class (or what is sometimes termed as aspiring class). As luxury penetrated into the masses, defining luxury has become difficult (Shukla. 2010). In contemporary marketing usage, Prof. Bernard Dubois (2004) defines 'luxury' as a specific (i.e. higher-priced) tier of offer in almost any product or service category. However, despite the substantial body of knowledge accumulated during the past decades, researchers still haven't arrived on a common definition of luxury. Many other attempts have been made to define luxury using the price-quality dimension stating higher priced products in any category is luxury. Similarly, researchers have used the uniqueness aspects of luxury too. Prof. Jean-Noel Kapferer (2005), takes an experiential approach and defines luxury as items which provide extra pleasure by flattering all senses at once. Several other researchers focus on exclusivity dimension and argue that luxury evokes a sense of

belonging to a certain elite group. Several manufactured products attain the status of "luxury goods" due to their design, quality, durability or performance that are remarkably superior to the comparable substitutes. Thus, virtually every category of goods available on the market today includes a subset of similar products whose "luxury" is marked by better-quality components and materials, solid construction, stylish appearance, increased durability, better performance, advanced features, and so on. As such, these luxury goods may retain or improve the basic functionality for which all items of a given category are originally designed. There are also goods that are perceived as luxurious by the public simply because they play a role of status symbols as such goods tend to signify the purchasing power of those who acquire them. These items, while not necessarily being better (in quality, performance, or appearance) than their less expensive substitutes, are purchased with the main purpose of displaying wealth or income of their owners. These kinds of goods are the objects of a socio-economic phenomenon called conspicuous consumption and commonly include luxury vehicles, watches, jewellery, designer clothing, yachts, as well as large residences and urban mansions.

1.2 Consumer behavior of luxury brands: The luxury market is fast expanding globally and there have been many changes in the consumer behavior towards luxury brands. The purchase of luxury brands, which was restricted earlier only to the elite and nobility, has now also reached to the newly emerging middle and high income classes. This has received a lot of attention ever since (Veblen, 1899) promulgated the theory of conspicuous consumption. Many other authors have shown lot of

interest in this topic for example Dubois and Laurent, 1994; Dubois *et al.*, 2001; Vigneron and Johnson, 2004; Wiedmann *et al.*, 2009, to name a few. There has been lesser research to find out what motivates a consumer to buy luxury brands. Consumers do not just buy a luxury brand; there are certain motivations which lead him/her to purchase the brand and derive satisfaction from the purchase. There are many factors that influence a consumer's motivation to buy a luxury product. We need to understand what consumers think about luxury, what motivates them to buy luxury and the different dimensions of luxury value which they look for. Hence it is important for marketers to identify and profile consumer segments. It is possible to cluster consumers into groups for luxury market segmentation using various luxury value dimensions like financial, functional, individual and social components that were suggested by Wiedmann *et al.* (2009).

1.3 Influence of ethnicity on purchase behavior of luxury brands: Ethnic identity is an aspect that focuses on how an ethnic group relates to its own group as a sub-group of the larger host society. The explication of the term 'ethnicity' has implied several dimensions including a sense of common customs, language, religion, values, morality and etiquette and has subsequently been measured in a number of ways. The measurement of ethnic identity has included objective indicators such as language use (Hazuda, Stern and Haffner 1988 ; Massey and Mullan 1984), country of origin, spouse's ethnic identity and social interaction (Driedger 1975), Hirschman 1981), parents' ethnic identity, paternal ancestry (Alba and Moore 1982) and subjective measures of self-identification (Hirschman 1981).

The report by Bain & Company, Inc., Jan 2014 finds that while luxury segments may be concentrated in specific geographies, there are shoppers from every segment in every major global luxury market. There is a global cycle from the enthusiasm of Chinese and other emerging market consumers to the mature caution of markets such as the United States and Western Europe to the detachment of older shoppers and consumers in Japan. But within this cycle there are significant country-level differences. Chinese shoppers are increasingly diverse and nuanced, ranging from a high degree of sophistication and luxury experience to luxury novices. Overall, Chinese consumers are the most "generous" nationality, with about half of shopping for gifting (versus an average of 40 percent at global level).

1.4 Influence of ethnicity on purchase behavior of luxury brands due to uniqueness and snob value:

The so called snob effect (Leibenstein, 1950) has its origin in both interpersonal as well as personal effects. It refers to the desire to own exclusive or unique rare goods which often have a high economic, but low practical value. The snob effect can occur in two types of situations: a) as soon as a new prestige product is on the market, the 'snob' will acquire it. So, the less an item is available, the higher its

snob value or b) status sensitive consumers start rejecting a product because it hit the masses. So, the more a product is available, the less is the desire to acquire it. The Japanese experience higher levels of social anxiety and exhibited lower levels of private self-consciousness than their American counterparts. This then would explain the fear of losing 'face' in front of others due to the social pressure. A strategy to avoid 'losing face' is to keep consuming in order to stay in the 'in-group'.

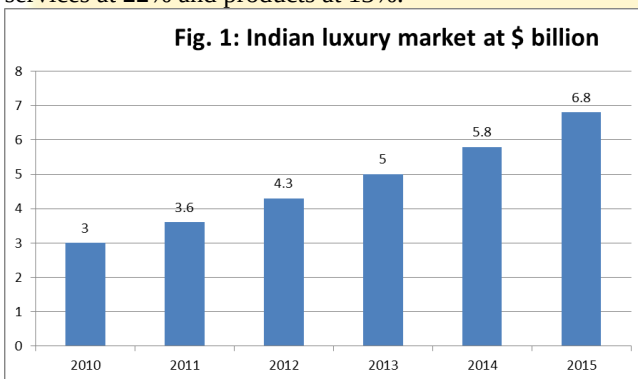
Sticking out of the crowd is however not a goal in the Japanese mind, instead, 'fitting in' is aimed at. Once one has found an 'in-group' it is better to stick to their fashion norms / rules but within the frame of the rules, one should try to be as unique as one can.

1.5 Emerging markets for luxury brands:

Developing countries including Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, Georgia, China and India are positioning themselves as valuable global retail markets for luxury brands looking to expand in these areas, according to research from A.T. Kearney. China is the No. 1 market in which luxury brands should currently be focusing their attention because of consumer desire to both buy products and invest in upscale companies, according to a panel at the Luxury Briefing Wealth Summit 2011. China is the No. 1 market in which luxury brands should currently be focusing their attention because of consumer desire to both buy products and invest in upscale companies, according to a panel at the Luxury Briefing Wealth Summit 2011. With U.S. consumers hesitant to start spending again, luxury brands should focus their marketing efforts in emerging markets, such as China, Brazil, Russia and India, according to a study by Boston Consulting Group.

The 'India luxury trends (2011-12) report' by Technopak says that over the past 10 years, the Indian economy has added USD \$ 975 billion to its economy and shall add twice as much, USD \$ 1811 billion, over the next decade to grow to the current size of a United Kingdom, France or Italy by 2020. This past transformational decade has fuelled the increase in the number of millionaires across India; owing to the robust economy, resurgent stock market and keen entrepreneurial drive; and the next 10 years will only augment this growth. The drivers of the world economy are increasingly polarizing towards the BRIC countries. The world luxury sector too shall find the maximum impetus from the increasing affluent consumers from these emerging economies. India ranks 15th amongst the countries having the maximum number of high net worth (HNI) individuals and is second only to Hong Kong in term of growth rates of this consumer segment. The coupled effect of above mentioned factors has led to this phenomenon of doubling the number of Indian millionaires over the past year. The optimistic Indian economy reflective of the GDP growth rates coupled with the increase in the consuming households will impact and define the Indian luxury sector over the coming years. The Indian luxury Industry shall grow to nearly two and half times of its current size over the next 5 years. This shall be

fuelled by the dynamic lifestyles of the heritage rich as well as the aspirational nouveau rich segment. The potential can be gauged by the following numbers reflective of the booming Indian economy. As per the 'India luxury trends (2011-12) report' by Technopak, India has over 2.0 million households earning USD \$ 100,000 or more annually and these households are expected to grow at a 13% rate over the coming years. The segment geared to show tremendous promise over the next few years is number of households earning between USD \$ 50,000 to \$ 100,000 annually. The two segments shall combine to contribute significantly to the growth of the luxury sector at 20% over the next 5 years to reach USD \$ 6.8 Billion in 2015 from the current USD \$ 3.0 Billion. This is given in **Fig. 1**. Luxury assets currently comprises the largest share of the luxury market at 65%, followed by services at 22% and products at 13%.



Source: India luxury trends (2011-12) report by Technopak

2. NEED FOR THE STUDY

This study tries to investigate consumers' intentions and motivations to purchase luxury brands. The study aims at discovering the purchase intention formation for luxury brands by examining uniqueness and snob value and how these can be influenced by ethnicity. This research can guide marketers to devise suitable marketing strategies based on their customers' ethnicity.

There have been many such studies done abroad for luxury customers of UK, Russia, Australia, Thailand and China but there is a paucity of study in an emerging market like India. In India, there is a class of new-rich people coming up very fast which have aspirations and desires to possess luxury brands. This study will definitely help to throw some light into uniqueness and snob value as important dimensions for purchase behaviour of luxury brands.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW:

3.1 The concept of luxury: Luxury is an abstract concept and can mean different things to different people across different cultures. Vigneron and Johnson (1999) suggested the definition of luxury as highest level of prestigious brands encompassing several physical and psychological values. Dubois and Laurent (1994) and Dubois *et al.* (2001) found that consumers' attitude

towards the concept of luxury vary considerably. Luxury products fulfil one's need, not only functional but also psychologically (Dubois *et al.*, 2001). Due to the fluidity of the concept, different people define luxury in different ways and so luxury is highly subjective. Its meaning is determined by personal and interpersonal motives and is therefore primarily built on consumer perception (Vigneron and Johnson, 2004). China and India share a similar background where for a large part of the twentieth century, both were under subjugation of imperial rule. Luxury goods that were commonplace suddenly vanished due to political factors such as closed borders government disapproval of luxuries and price inaccessibility. Now that both countries have open borders and a burgeoning middle class, they are able to afford luxury products (Danziger, 2005; Thomas, 2007). Consumers are motivated to buy luxury products with great enthusiasm as a means of self-expression and rebelling against the subjugation of the past (Chadha & Husband, 2006).

3.2 Factors influencing purchase of luxury brands:

Teck-Yong Eng et al (2010) in their paper 'Psychological and cultural insights into consumption of luxury western brands in India' examine why consumers buy luxury, what they believe luxury is and how their perception of luxury impacts buying behavior in the context of India. **Chelsey Latter et al** (2010) in their study 'The Roles of Consumers' Need for Uniqueness and Status Consumption in Haute Couture Luxury Brands' talk about the consumers' need for uniqueness and status consumption and provides an insight into Australian Generation Y consumers' purchasing intentions toward an haute couture luxury apparel brand and its ready to wear range. The primary objective is to assess how status and non-status consumers' attitudes in relation to their need for unique luxury apparel products and brands affects purchase intentions. This helps to highlight attitudinal and behavioral variables which marketers should consider when they introduce or market luxury fashion apparel. Findings indicate brand judgements have the strongest most significant effect on purchase intentions and differ according to the type of consumers' need for uniqueness. **Khor Eng Tatt** (2010) in his study 'Factors Influencing Consumer Buying Behavior of Luxury Branded Goods' focuses on how consumer buying behavior reacts with regards to luxury branded goods. The study explains whether there is any interaction between the independent variable (Price, Perceived Quality, Perceived Societal Status and Brand Loyalty) and moderating variable (Income) with the dependent variable (Consumer Buying Behavior). A survey questionnaire was developed using adaptation from earlier study done on the similar topic. Survey question was administered to 200 respondents via mass mailing of email to friends and colleagues and response was collected and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science in short SPSS. Analysis result shows that Perceived Social Status and Brand Loyalty are significantly related to the factors affecting Consumer

Buying Behavior where Price and Perceived Quality were significantly related. Result of SPSS analysis indicated that monthly Income does not moderate the interactions between the independent variable, Brand Loyalty and dependent variable, Consumer Buying Behavior.

Thus we observe that factors like societal status, uniqueness, brand loyalty and quality have been considered which influence the purchase behavior of luxury brands. Apart from this, there are demographic variables like age, gender, occupation, income groups, marital status and educational qualifications which influence the purchase behavior of luxury brands. The purchase behavior of luxury brands also gets influenced by the need to have functional or usability value, snob value, financial value and self-identity value.

3.3 Role of ethnicity in consumer purchase behavior:

Youn -Kyung Kim & Jikyeong Kang (2001) in their study 'The Effects of Ethnicity and Product on Purchase Decision Making' explain that the ethnic diversity of the United States makes it critical to develop advertising strategies for specific target segments, which entails investigating how ethnic consumers differ in their various purchase decision-making patterns. This study examined the three main ethnic consumer groups in the United States (blacks, Hispanics. and whites) in their decision-making patterns in purchasing social clothes {*value-expressive* product) and small electronics {*utilitarian* product). These ethnic consumer groups displayed distinct patterns in their informational influences (media and reference group) and perceptions of store attribute importance, with the patterns differing for the two types of products. The findings indicate that advertisers should craft their advertising strategies to aim them at a particular ethnic group for a specific type of product.

According to the study 'Status consumption and ethnicity in Bolivia: evidence from durables ownership' by Luuk van Kempen (2005), the 'compensatory consumption' hypothesis advanced by Caplovitz in 1967 predicts that households facing racial or ethnic discrimination tend to spend heavily on socially visible consumption goods to make up for their low-status position in society. This paper provides an empirical test of this prediction in Bolivia, where people of indigenous origin face social exclusion. Using recent household survey data, we examine whether low-income households of indigenous origin overspend on socially visible durable goods relative to equally poor, non-indigenous households. A marked difference was seen in the propensity for compensatory consumption between the two largest indigenous groups in Bolivia.

A study on 'Impact of Cultural Dimensions on Apparel Purchase Behavior "Comparison of North and South Indian States"' by Atul Kumar, M. Ravichandran and Vikas Nath (2013) says that today's marketer is confronted not only with the challenge of identifying the segments but also has to counter the impact of globalization which has removed all boundaries. India is one of the most culturally diverse nations of the world. India can be divided into

numerous cultures and traditions. One of the basis of segmentation in India is North India and South India. The key challenge for marketer here is to address the need of different regions with same strategies or create tailor made strategies for the respective regions. The study of cross culture has gained significant importance and no company can afford to ignore the concept while expanding their operations into new culture/country.

The study 'From saris to sarongs' ethnicity and intergenerational influences on consumption among Asian Indians in the UK' by Yasmin K. Sekhon (2007) investigates the role of ethnicity and intergenerational influences on the consumption patterns of Asian Indians living in the UK The research determines the extent to which (a) ethnicity and (b) intergenerational factors influence consumption and decision making. The empirical evidence suggests that ethnicity, background and cultural roots impact on consumer decision making and brand choice. The study aims to develop the research on the role and strength of intergenerational influences in an Asian Indian context; bringing together acculturation, generational and consumption theory.

The study 'Global Brands in the United States: How Consumer Ethnicity Mediates the Global brand Effect' by Claudiu V. Dimofte, Johny K. Johansson, and Richard P. Bagozzi (2010) says that previous cross-cultural research has demonstrated a consistently positive effect of brand globality on consumer perceptions, attitudes, and purchase intentions. The authors evaluate these effects on three ethnic segments of U.S. consumers. Drawing on survey data analysis and the estimates of a structural equation model, the research shows that associations with global brands as a general category vary across ethnic groups. Caucasian consumers show less of an appreciation of global brands, whereas African Americans and Hispanics show patterns similar to those in prior research. Although the average consumer views brand globality as an attribute of little importance, the structural equation findings show a direct effect of globality on attitudes and purchases. Overall, mainstream consumers in the United States are less favorable toward global brands than minority groups but patronize them at the same overall rate.

The study 'Purchasing behaviors of the consumers based on ethnic identities in Turkey' by Meltem Nurtanis Velioglu, Süreyya Karsu & Meftune Özbakir Umut (2011) examined the impact of ethnic identity on purchasing behavior resulting from ethnic marketing. The research was conducted among 11 ethnic groups in Düzce; a city of Turkey: Abkhazians, Albanians, Bosnians, Circassians, Cremean Turks, Georgians, Gypsies, Kurds, Lazs, Manav People and Muhajirs. Data was collected through two forms: in depth interviews with 11 ethnic groups' male participants and focus group interviews with 11 ethnic groups' female participants. The results indicated that the economic equality among these ethnic groups was the driving force to live in peace for centuries and that the buying behaviors of these ethnic groups varied. Food and beverage type products were found to be a means for

recognizing other cultures. This research would be helpful for the food sector oriented development in ethnic marketing practices. In addition this research may help to identify the required ethnic tourism marketing practices depending on the ethnic groups' cultural values and longing through ancestral lands.

The study 'Perceived "Hispanicness" Versus "Americanness": A Study of brand ethnicity with Hispanic Consumers' by Cong Li, Wan-Hsiu Sunny Tsai & Gonzalo Soruco (2013) discusses how consumers differentiate competing brands with similar utilitarian value on the basis of brand ethnicity, and examines how perceived brand ethnicity influences consumers' brand preference and choice. Study findings, based on both qualitative and quantitative research with self-identified Hispanic consumers, indicate that Hispanic consumers associate certain brands with Hispanic culture and other brands with American culture. In a hypothetical purchasing scenario, perceived brand ethnicity affects consumers' brand preference significantly in accordance with their cultural orientation. However, in a real consumer behavior setting, external factors such as brand accessibility attenuate the effects of brand ethnicity.

Gap analysis: Nueno and Quelch (1998) have emphasized on creativity for luxury brands, but not focused on other characteristics like quality and exclusivity. Durvasula, Lyonski & Watson (2001) have studied cross-cultural differences in vanity and compared them in Eastern and Western cultures but other demographic variables have not been considered. Gardyn (2002), Chadha & Husband (2007), Berthon et al (2009) have studied about high reputation of luxury goods which illustrate functional, symbolic &/or experiential values in perception of owners. But impact of demographic variables on purchase of luxury brands has not been studied. Jung & Shen (2011) have studied the cultural effects on consumer behaviour but other demographic and psychographic variables have not been considered. Thakor & Pecotich (2007) have suggested that country of origin plays a role in shaping brand personality but other demographic and psychographic variables have not been considered. Hauck & Stanforth (2007) have considered the impact of age on purchase of luxury brands but other demographic and psychographic variables have not been considered. Rolf-Seringhaus (2002) have considered the motivation of people for consuming luxury according to psychographics and dividing luxury consumers into three segments i.e. 'Old money', 'Nouveau riche' and 'Excursionists', but other demographic variables have not been considered. Tynan et al (2008) have considered four types of luxury value i.e. functional value, hedonic value, symbolic value and cost value. But impact of demographic variables on purchase of luxury brands has not been considered. Wiedmann et al (2007) have considered financial value, functional value, personal value, social value and luxury value for luxury brands but impact of demographic and psychographic variables on purchase of luxury brands has not been considered. Chaudhari & Majumdar (2006) have

considered the impact of culture, social status and self-identity on purchase of luxury brands but other demographic variables have not been considered. Lai & Chu (2006) have done a study on Taiwanese-Chinese luxury consumers and the consumer behavior consisted of self-monitoring, susceptibility to interpersonal influence and social value. A similar study can be done for Indian luxury consumers. Wong & Ahuvia (1998) have studied the impact of culture, social status, hedonic value and country of origin but other demographic variables have not been considered. Chadha & Husband (2006) have divided the Asian economies into five stages of 'Luxe Evolution'. They have studied the brand awareness, price factor, gifting of luxury brands, status value and aesthetic value of Chinese consumers and a similar study has been done for Indian consumers. But impact of demographic variables on purchase of luxury brands has not been considered.

The impact of culture on purchase of luxury brands was considered but *other demographic variables were not considered in the study done by Shukla, Paurav (2011)*. The study by Han, Young Jee et al (2010) shows how purchase of luxury brands depends on wealth but *other factors like age, occupation, culture, personality, gender and culture have not been considered*. The study by Lasaleta et al (2010) considers the impact of wealth and psychographics on purchase of luxury brands but other demographic variables have not been considered. The study by WWD: Women's Wear Daily, (2010) considers the impact of culture and wealth but not other demographic and psychographic variables on purchase of luxury brands. The study by Mayne, Eric (2010) shows the impact of culture on purchase of luxury brands but other demographic variables have not been considered. Berthon et al (2009), in their article present a philosophical analysis of luxury brands, focusing on their aesthetics and degree of ephemerality. *The gap in the study is that purchase of luxury brands with respect to demographic variables like age, gender, culture etc. has not been considered*. In the study by Benady, David (2008), financial factors affecting purchase of luxury brands have been considered but demographic variables have not been considered. The study by Heilman et al (2007) is an interesting study on consumer behavior not undertaken by other authors but *other variables like age and income also need to be considered*. The study by Mandel et al (2006) considers the psychographic profile of consumers but demographic profile has not been considered. The study by Dinakar, S.(2006) shows that purchase behavior of luxury brands is not the same in China and India. This reflects the impact of culture but *other demographic and psychographic variables have not been considered*. The study by Seringhaus, F. H. Rolf (2005) considers the impact of culture on purchase of luxury brands but other demographic variables have not been considered. Also, the study by Nelson et al (2005) shows the purchase behavior of Indians towards local and international brands but other variables like age, gender and income have not been considered. The study by Prendergast et al (2003)

considers wealth and design and quality of luxury brands but other demographic variables have not been considered. Atwal & Williams (2009) have said that luxury products no longer provide solely on functional values, but also, on emotional values and social values. But impact of demographic variables on purchase of luxury products has not been studied. Ko et al (2010) has emphasized on high quality value for luxury brands, but other dimensions of luxury value have not been considered. Hwang and Han (2013) investigated the antecedents and consequences of brand prestige in the luxury cruise industry to provide luxury cruise managers with practical strategies for optimizing brand prestige. But other dimensions of luxury value have not been considered. Achabou and Dekhili (2013) explored the extent to which sustainable development could be associated with luxury products and examined the propensity of consumers to consider recycled materials in luxury purchases. But they have not considered other things like financial value, self-identity value and uniqueness value.

Yu et al. (2013) investigated how brand image, country of origin, and self-congruity influence internet users' purchase intention. But they have not considered the impact of demographic variables on purchase of luxury brands. Pina et al. (2013) examined the generalisability of forward and feedback impacts of durable goods and service brand extensions through a comprehensive study and four replications. But influence of demographic variables on purchase of luxury brands has not been considered. Meffert and Lasslop (2003) & Trommsdorff and Heine (2008) have defined luxury brands as images in the minds of consumers that comprise associations about a high level of price, quality, aesthetics, rarity and specialty. But they have not considered the impact of demographic variables on purchase of luxury products. Rucker and Galinsky (2008) found that people with low power status tend to engage in compensatory consumption by preferring products associated with social status to products without such an association. But other dimensions of luxury value have not been considered. Hofstede (1980, 2001); Oyserman (2006) have found that consumers with high power-distance would show a stronger preference for luxury status brands (vs. standard brands) than those with low power-distance. But impact of demographic variables on purchase of luxury products has not been considered.

COO (Country of origin) can affect consumers in a number of ways, including social status, store or product choice, perceived risk, and in particular, product evaluation such as quality perception, product attitude or purchase intention (Liefeld, 1993; Papadopoulos, 1993; Brodowsky, 1998; Kaynak et al., 2000; Li et al., 2000; Chao, 2001; Huddleston et al., 2001; and Chui et al., 2007). But impact of demographic variables on purchase of luxury products has not been considered. The influence of COO exists in both product assessment and decision-making processes as explained by Reiersen, 1966; Bilkey and Nes, 1982; LaTour and Henthorne, 1990; Jaffe and Martinez, 1995; Zain and Yasin, 1997; Verlegh and Steenkamp, 1999; and

Solomon, 2004. But impact of demographic variables on purchase of luxury products has not been considered.

Author /Year	Focus area	Missing areas
Reiersen, 1966; Bilkey and Nes, 1982; LaTour and Henthorne, 1990; Jaffe and Martinez, 1995; Zain and Yasin, 1997; Verlegh and Steenkamp, 1999; and Solomon, 2004	<i>They have explained that the influence of COO exists in both product assessment and decision-making processes</i>	<i>But impact of demographic variables like ethnicity on purchase of luxury products has not been considered.</i>
Hofstede (1980, 2001); Oyserman (2006)	<i>They have found that consumers with high power-distance would show a stronger preference for luxury status brands (vs. standard brands) than those with low power-distance.</i>	<i>But impact of demographic variables like ethnicity on purchase of luxury products has not been considered.</i>
Liefeld, 1993; Papadopoulos, 1993; Brodowsky, 1998; Kaynak et al., 2000; Li et al., 2000; Chao, 2001; Huddleston et al., 2001; and Chui et al., 2007	<i>They have said that COO (Country of origin) can affect consumers in a number of ways, including social status, store or product choice, perceived risk, and in particular, product evaluation such as quality perception, product attitude or purchase intention.</i>	<i>But impact of demographic variables like ethnicity on purchase of luxury products has not been considered</i>
Bhat & Reddy (1998)	<i>Impact of country of origin on purchase of luxury brands is studied.</i>	<i>Other demographic variables like ethnicity are missing variables.</i>
Nueno and Quelch (1998)	<i>They have emphasised on creativity for luxury brands</i>	<i>Not focused on other characteristics like quality and exclusivity.</i>
Wong & Ahuvia (1998)	<i>They have studied the impact of</i>	<i>Other demographic</i>

	culture, social status, hedonic value and country of origin	variables like ethnicity have not been considered.
Haubl & Elrod (1999)	They have pointed out that one's emotion can be a trigger to product purchase	Other variables like demographic variables like ethnicity have not been considered.
Vigneron & Johnson (1999), Wiedmann et al (2009), Han et al (2010)	Have focused on the personal orientation and social orientation for consumption of luxury brands	Impact of demographic variables like ethnicity on purchase of luxury brands has not been studied
Batra et al (2000)	Perception of luxury brands among developing countries is studied.	Demographic variables and psychographic variables are the missing variables.
Durvasula, Lysonski & Watson (2001)	They have studied cross-cultural differences in vanity and compared them in Eastern and Western cultures	Other demographic variables like ethnicity have not been considered.
Rolf-Seringhaus (2002)	They have considered the motivation of people for consuming luxury according to psychographics and dividing luxury consumers into three segments i.e. 'Old money', 'Nouveau riche' and 'Excursionists'.	Other demographic variables like ethnicity have not been considered.
Gardyn (2002), Chadha & Husband (2007), Berthon et al (2009)	They have studied about high reputation of luxury goods which illustrate functional, symbolic &/or experiential values in perception of owners.	But impact of demographic variables like ethnicity on purchase of luxury brands has not been studied.
Prendergast et	Impact of wealth,	Other

al (2003)	design and quality of luxury brands is studied.	demographic variables like ethnicity are missing variables.
Meffert and Lasslop (2003) & Trommsdorff and Heine (2008)	They have defined luxury brands as images in the minds of consumers that comprise associations about a high level of price, quality, aesthetics, rarity and specialty.	They have not considered the impact of demographic variables on purchase of luxury products.
Serringhaus, F.H. Rolf (2005)	Impact of culture on purchase of luxury brands is studied.	Other demographic variables are missing variables.
Nelson et al (2005)	Purchase behaviour of Indians towards local and international brands is studied.	Other variables like age, gender, ethnicity and income are missing variables.
Serringhaus (2005).	Studied the presence of luxury brands online	Impact of demographic variables like ethnicity on purchase of luxury brands has not been studied
De-Moorj (2005), Hofstede (2008)	Impact of culture on purchase of luxury brands is studied	Other demographic variables like ethnicity are missing variables.
Mandel et al (2006)	Study on psychographic profile of luxury consumers	Demographic variables like ethnicity are missing variables.
Dinakar,S (2006)	Study on differences in purchase behaviour of luxury brands in China and India	Other demographic and psychographic variables are missing variables.
Chaudhari & Majumdar (2006)	They have considered the impact of culture, social status and	Other demographic variables have not been

	self-identity on purchase of luxury brands	considered.
Chadha & Husband (2006)	They have divided the Asian economies into five stages of 'Luxe Evolution'. They have studied the brand awareness, price factor, gifting of luxury brands, status value and aesthetic value of Chinese consumers and a similar study has been done for Indian consumers.	But impact of demographic variables like ethnicity on purchase of luxury brands has not been considered.
Heilman et al (2007)	Study on consumer behaviour	Other variables like age, ethnicity and income are missing variables.
Hauck & Stanforth (2007)	Impact of age on purchase of luxury brands is studied.	Other demographic variables like ethnicity are missing variables.
Thakor & Pecotich (2007)	They have suggested that country of origin plays a role in shaping brand personality	Other demographic and psychographic variables have not been considered.
Wiedmann et al (2007)	They have considered financial value, functional value, personal value, social value and luxury value for luxury brands	Impact of demographic and psychographic variables on purchase of luxury brands has not been considered.
Tynan et al (2008)	They have considered four types of luxury value i.e. functional value, hedonic value, symbolic value and cost value.	But impact of demographic variables like ethnicity on purchase of luxury brands has not been considered.
Benady, David (2008)	Impact of financial factors on purchase of luxury brands is	Demographic variables like age, gender,

	studied.	ethnicity and occupation are missing variables.
Rucker and Galinsky (2008)	They found that people with low power status tend to engage in compensatory consumption by preferring products associated with social status to products without such an association	But other dimensions of luxury value like snob value and uniqueness value have not been considered
Berthon et al (2009)	Impact of aesthetics and degree of ephemerality on purchase of luxury brands is studied.	Other demographic variables like age, gender, ethnicity and culture are missing variables.
Berthon et al (2009)	Impact of brand perception on purchase of luxury brands is studied.	Demographic variables and psychographic variables are the missing variables.
Atwal & Williams (2009)	They have said that luxury products no longer provide solely on functional values, but also, on emotional values and social values.	But impact of demographic variables like ethnicity on purchase of luxury products has not been studied.
Han, Young Jee et al (2010)	Impact of wealth on purchase of luxury brands is studied	Other factors like age, occupation, culture, ethnicity, personality and gender are the missing variables.
Lasaleta et al (2010)	Impact of wealth and psychographics on purchase of luxury brands is studied.	Other demographic variables are missing variables.
Women's Wear Daily (2010)	Impact of culture and wealth on purchase of demographic variables is studied.	Other demographic and psychographic variables are missing

		variables.
Mayne, Eric (2010)	<i>Impact of culture on purchase of luxury brands is studied.</i>	<i>Other demographic variables like ethnicity are missing variables.</i>
Ko et al (2010)	<i>He has emphasised on high quality value for luxury brands.</i>	<i>But other dimensions of luxury value like uniqueness value and snob value have not been considered.</i>
Jung & Shen (2011)	<i>They have studied the cultural effects on consumer behaviour</i>	<i>Other demographic and psychographic variables have not been considered.</i>
Shukla, Paurav (2011)	<i>Impact of culture on purchase of luxury brands is studied</i>	<i>Other demographic variables like gender, age, income, ethnicity and occupation are missing variables.</i>
Hwang and Han (2013)	<i>They investigated the antecedents and consequences of brand prestige in the luxury cruise industry to provide luxury cruise managers with practical strategies for optimizing brand prestige.</i>	<i>But other dimensions of luxury value like uniqueness value and snob value have not been considered.</i>
Achabou and Dekhili (2013)	<i>They explored the extent to which sustainable development could be associated with luxury products and examined the propensity of consumers to consider recycled materials in luxury purchases.</i>	<i>But they have not considered other things like financial value, self-identity value and uniqueness value.</i>
Yu et al. (2013)	<i>They investigated how brand image, country of origin,</i>	<i>But they have not considered the impact of</i>

	<i>and self-congruity influence internet users' purchase intention.</i>	<i>demographic variables like ethnicity on purchase of luxury brands.</i>
Pina et al. (2013)	<i>They examined the generalisability of forward and feedback impacts of durable goods and service brand extensions through a comprehensive study and four replications.</i>	<i>But influence of demographic variables like ethnicity on purchase of luxury brands has not been considered.</i>

There have many studies done on motivations for luxury purchase behaviour and dimensions for luxury value abroad but not much work has been done in India in this regard. There have been studies looking at the four important dimensions of luxury value namely financial value, functional value, individual value and social value, but there has not been much emphasis on uniqueness and snob value as two important dimensions of luxury value. Hence this paper tries to understand whether uniqueness and snob value are influenced by the ethnicity of the luxury customer.

5. IDENTIFICATION OF VARIABLES

Here we want to consider uniqueness value and snob value and see whether they get influenced by the ethnicity of the luxury customer. People want to show that they own luxury brands not possessed by others and they buy brands which set them apart from others. They want to look different from others, buy brands which others cannot buy and stop using those brands which have become very popular.

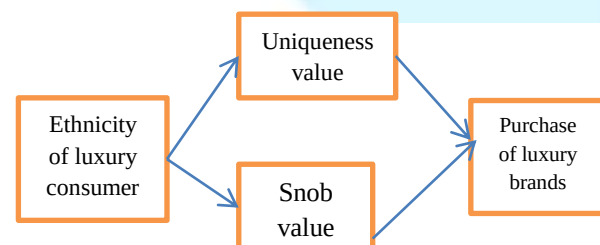
Hence uniqueness value and snob value are the dependent variables and ethnicity of the luxury customer is the independent variable. Then we will see how purchase of luxury brands depends on ethnicity of the luxury customer and his/her uniqueness value and snob value.

6. DEVELOPING THE THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT

Here we are considering uniqueness value and snob value and see whether there is any significant influence of ethnicity of the luxury customer on these two values.

We have proposed the theoretical model shown in Fig. 2

Fig.2



7. OBJECTIVES

- (i) **To understand the importance of uniqueness and snob value as important luxury dimensions:** Here we want to study how uniqueness and snob value as luxury dimensions influence the purchase behavior of luxury brands for luxury consumers in Mumbai.
- (ii) **To understand whether uniqueness value and snob value are influenced by ethnicity of the luxury customer.**

8. HYPOTHESIS

- (i) Exclusivity and uniqueness is one of the important characteristics of a luxury brand. The customer wants that the product owned by him/her should be unique and not possessed by others. The rarer or more unique a brand is, the more value it symbolizes, at least in consumer's perception (Sun, 2011). Therefore luxury brands are usually sold in malls, speciality stores or high end department stores and not in supermarkets.
We want to understand whether uniqueness value is considered important by luxury consumers in purchase of luxury brands. Hence the first hypothesis can be taken as
H0: Uniqueness value is not considered important by luxury consumers.
H1: Uniqueness value is considered important by luxury consumers.
- (ii) People want to purchase luxury products because they are scarce and not easily available. They will not like to buy those products which are widely accepted or easily available. We want to understand whether snob value is considered important by luxury consumers in purchase of luxury brands. Hence the second hypothesis can be taken as
H0: Snob value is not considered important by luxury consumers.
H1: Snob value is considered important by luxury consumers.
- (iii) We want to understand whether ethnicity of the luxury consumer influences uniqueness value i.e. we want to know whether the perception of uniqueness value differs among North Indians, South Indians, East Indians and West Indians. Hence the third hypothesis can be taken as
H0: There is no significant influence of ethnicity on uniqueness value
H1: There is a significant influence of ethnicity on uniqueness value
- (iv) We want to understand whether ethnicity of the luxury consumer influences snob value i.e. we want to know whether the perception of snob value differs among North Indians, South

Indians, East Indians and West Indians. Hence the fourth hypothesis can be taken as
H0: There is no significant influence of ethnicity on snob value
H1: There is a significant influence of ethnicity on snob value

9. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, uniqueness value has been evaluated through structured survey with four statements namely (i) I like to buy luxury brands which are very exclusive (ii) I like to buy unusual products to show other people I am different (iii) I like to communicate to others about my uniqueness, especially when buying merchandises (iv) I look to expand my personal uniqueness by buying special products or collections. Snob value consists of statements namely (i) I am not into products or brands that are widely accepted and purchased by general consumers. (ii) When a product I own becomes well known among the average population, I begin to stop using or use it less. (iii) When I am around people, I must look best otherwise I would feel embarrassed. Gender, age, educational level, occupation, religion, monthly income and marital status are demographic variables inquired in the survey. The profile of respondents is shown in **Table 1**.

TABLE 1: Demographic profile analysis

Gender	Male 67%	Female 33%
Age	<25 48%	25-40 49%
Occupation	Business 33%	Professional 47%
Marital Status	Single 70%	Married/Widowed 30%
Education	College 97%	Postgraduate 60%
Monthly Income	Starting from Rs. 50000 to more than Rs. 5 lakhs	

Sample characteristics and data collection: The sample of 329 respondents was taken from Mumbai and consisted of both genders, age ranging from up to 25 years to more than 50 years. They were people of different educational backgrounds, occupations, income groups, marital status and religions. The sampling procedure used for the study was simple random sampling technique. Respondents were asked to express their agreement/disagreement with statements on a five-point Likert type scale with anchors ranging from "1 = strongly agree" and "5 = strongly disagree".

Table 2: Ethnicity

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Valid	North Indian	84	25.4	25.5	25.5
	South Indian	65	19.6	19.8	45.3
	East	42	12.7	12.8	58.1

	Indian				
	West Indian	138	41.7	41.9	100.0
	Total	329	99.4	100.0	
Missing	System	2	.6		
Total		331	100.0		

Data analysis

The collected data has been entered and analyzed in SPSS 20. Various statistical tests have been extracted using SPSS. Reliability of the measures for the constructs is evaluated by Cronbach's Alpha.

The **Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy** (KMO), with a value of 0.851, which is greater than 0.7 shows that the sample size was sufficiently large to conduct the study.

In order to find whether uniqueness value and snob value are influenced by ethnicity, we use regression to see the dependence of uniqueness value and snob value on ethnicity of the luxury consumer. The ethnicity of the luxury consumer is of four categories i.e. North Indian, South Indian, East Indian and West Indian.

10. RESULTS

10.1 Validity and reliability assessment: Reliability of the scales is measured by computing the Cronbach alpha. For both the constructs namely uniqueness value and snob value, the Cronbach alpha values is above the cut-off value (0.70) recommended by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). This is shown in **Table 3**.

Table 3

Reliability Statistics for uniqueness value	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.812	4
Reliability Statistics for snob value	
Cronbach alpha	N of Items
0.735	3

10.2 Table 4 also shows the resulting **mean scores** of each value. We observe that the mean score is closer to 2.5 for both uniqueness value and snob value. This means that buyers of luxury brands consider uniqueness value and snob value as important dimensions of luxury value.

Also the scores for uniqueness and snob value are more for North Indians and West Indians as compared to South Indians and East Indians.

Table 4

Value	Mean score
Uniqueness	2.7
Snob	2.8

Ethnicity	Uniqueness value score (Score closer to 1 indicates high score)	Snob value score (Score closer to 1 indicates high score)
-----------	--	--

North Indians	1.8	2
South Indians	2.9	3
East Indians	3	3.1
West Indians	2.2	2.3

Table 5: Use of Regression of Uniqueness on ethnicity : ANOVA table

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	85.623	1	85.623	126.077	.000 ^b
Residual	222.077	327	.679		
Total	307.701	328			

Dependent Variable: uniqueness

Predictors: (Constant), ethnicity

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	1.752	.109		16.110	.000
	Ethnicity	.409	.036	.528	11.228	.000

a. Dependent Variable: uniqueness

Table 6: Use of Regression of Snob value on ethnicity: ANOVA table

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	81.031	1	81.031	122.994	.000 ^b
Residual	215.434	327	.659		
Total	296.465	328			

Dependent Variable: snob value

Predictors: (Constant), ethnicity

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
	(Constant)	2.092	.107		19.536	.000
	ethnicity	.398	.036	.523	11.090	.000

a. Dependent Variable: snob value

10.3 Testing of hypothesis:

We will be testing the hypothesis to find out whether uniqueness value and snob value are considered important by luxury customers and whether they get influenced by ethnicity of the luxury consumer. For this, we make use of regression.

Hypothesis	Test used	Significance value	Accept/Reject hypothesis	Decision
H1. Uniqueness value is considered important by luxury consumers.	Regression	< 0.05	Accept H1	Uniqueness value is considered important by luxury consumers.
H2. Snob value is considered important by luxury consumers	Regression	< 0.05	Accept H2	Snob value is considered important by luxury consumers.
H3. There is a significant influence of ethnicity on uniqueness value	Regression	< 0.05	Accept H3	Ethnicity has a significant influence on uniqueness value
H4. There is a significant influence of ethnicity on snob value	Regression	< 0.05	Accept H4	Ethnicity has a significant influence on snob value

11. DISCUSSION

We have considered two dimensions of luxury value namely uniqueness value and snob value and used regression to find whether ethnicity of the luxury consumers has an influence on uniqueness value and snob value. This will show whether people of different ethnicities like people from north, south, east and western part of India differ in their uniqueness value and snob value.

- (i) These four groups of people are asked to give an ethnic score from 1 to 5 (1 indicates lowest score

and 5 indicates highest score), depending on how they feel about their own culture. It is observed that the South Indians and East Indians show a higher ethnic score as compared to North Indians and West Indians. This is shown below:

Ethnicity * ethnic score Cross tabulation						
Count						
		Ethnic score				
		1	2	3	4	5
Ethnicity	North Indian	38	12	9	11	2
	South Indian	14	16	13	25	6
	East Indian	17	9	5	12	3
	West Indian	109	24	1	3	0
Total		178	61	28	51	11

- (ii) Next, we find the correlation between purchase intention and Uniqueness value. We observe that there is a positive correlation between these two variables. This means that people who have a higher score for uniqueness show a higher intention for purchase of luxury brands. They want to buy luxury products which are exclusive and not possessed by others. This is shown below.

Correlations			
		Intention to repurchase brand	uniqueness
Intention to repurchase brand	Pearson Correlation	1	.081
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.144
	N	329	329
Uniqueness	Pearson Correlation	.081	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.144	
	N	329	329

- (iii) Next, we find the correlation between purchase intention and Snob value. We observe that there is a positive correlation between these two variables. This means that people who have a higher score for snob value show a higher intention for purchase of luxury brands. They want to buy luxury products to show off what they have and they will not buy those luxury products which are possessed by others. This is shown below.

Correlations			
		Intention to repurchase brand	Snob value
Intention to repurchase brand	Pearson Correlation	1	.012
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.831
	N	329	329
Snob value	Pearson	.012	1

	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.831	
	N	329	329

(iv) Next, we find the correlation between purchase intention and ethnic score. We observe that there is a slight negative correlation between these two variables. This means that people with high ethnic scores i.e. people mainly from south and east of India will show a lesser intention for purchase of luxury brands. These people do not believe in show-off like north Indians and West Indians and hence have lesser scores on uniqueness and snob value. This is shown below:

Correlations			
		Ethnic score	Intention to repurchase brand
Ethnic score	Pearson Correlation	1	-.028
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.617
	N	329	329
Intention to repurchase brand	Pearson Correlation	-.028	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.617	

Mathematical model:

We can show the above relationship in the form of a mathematical equation as

$P = K_1 E + K_2 U + K_3 S$ where P = Purchase of luxury brands, E = ethnic score,

U = Uniqueness value and S = Snob value

Applying regression to the above relationship, we get the following table.

Coefficients ^a					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	1.985	.418		4.746 .000
	uniqueness	.105	.066	.104	1.601 .110
	Ethnic score	-.041	.070	-.052	-.585 .559
	Snob value	.087	.099	.084	.871 .384

a. Dependent Variable: intention to repurchase brand

From the above table, we get the regression equation as $P = 1.985 + 0.105 U - 0.041 E + 0.087 S$

For a particular luxury customer, we can consider his/her ethnic score (from 1 to 5), uniqueness value (from 1 to 5) and snob value (from 1 to 5). By substituting these values in the above equation, we can find out a person's intention to purchase a luxury brand.

12. CONCLUSIONS

From hypothesis testing, we have concluded that luxury consumers give a lot of importance to uniqueness value and snob value. We have also found that the ethnicity of the luxury consumer will have an influence on uniqueness

value and snob value. This means that the perception of a luxury product as being unique and exclusive and possessing something which others cannot buy will differ for people of different ethnicities. It is found that North Indians and West Indians show a higher uniqueness and snob value as compared to people from South and East. They have a higher tendency to show off their possessions and hence try to show their superiority over others.

13. BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

Knowledge of all relevant aspects of consumer perceptions of luxury can be useful for managerial practice. We can understand that uniqueness and snob value are very important dimensions of luxury value and how they influence purchase behavior of luxury brands. We can also understand how uniqueness and snob value get influenced by ethnicity of the luxury consumer. This will help luxury brand companies to provide their customers with products which provide them uniqueness and snob value and also they can make strategies differently for different segments based on ethnicity. Thus it is the marketer's duty to consider individual differences in evaluating luxury values and provide them products which satisfy their requirements.

14. LIMITATIONS

First, the sample size taken is small which may not be a very good representation of the population. Secondly, only uniqueness and snob value as dimensions of luxury value have been considered. We can apply similar analysis for the other dimensions like functional value, financial value, individual value and social value. The study can also be done taking a particular luxury product or service and by considering other demographic variables. This becomes the scope for further research.

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